

Statement of Senator Judd Gregg
Supplemental Funding for Iraq
October 3, 2003

Mr. President, I wish to speak briefly. I understand the Senator from North Dakota is also going to speak. I want to talk on this piece of legislation but, more importantly, on the overall approach we take toward fighting terrorism as a nation.

First off, as to this bill, which is obviously an extraordinarily expensive bill--over \$80 billion, much of which goes to support our forces in Iraq, which is absolutely critical, and some of which goes to assisting in the rebuilding of Iraq--many of my colleagues and others have questioned the dollars going to the rebuilding of Iraq and whether that is an appropriate way to spend American tax dollars. I think, however, we have to look at this issue not from the standpoint of whether it is benefiting Iraq but whether it is benefiting us, the American people.

I don't think there is any question but that it benefits the American people. Our purpose here is to defeat terrorism. Our purpose here is to undermine the capacity of those people who would use violence against Americans and against our system and against our Nation. We learned from 9/11, regrettably, that there are, unfortunately, groups out there who subscribe to what is known as Muslim fundamentalism, who are willing to pervert the Muslim faith, and who wish to pursue actions of violence against us as a nation, and against Americans as people, simply because we exist. For whatever reasons, they see us as their enemies, and there are a variety of reasons, which I will not go into. They obviously have the capacity and have shown their willingness to do us damage and harm. We have to respond to that.

Fortunately, we have a President who understands this--understands it in a way that I think many of us don't fully appreciate. I happen to, however, greatly admire it. The fact is, in President Bush we have someone who is very focused on the issue of protecting the United States and all Americans, defeating the threat of terrorism, and finding terrorists and bringing them to justice before they can do us harm. As part of that effort, there is a philosophy that I think is very appropriate that we are pursuing as a nation, which is that we will go out and find the terrorists before they can find us. We will kick over the rocks under which they hide and bring them to justice in whatever manner is appropriate--before they can get out from underneath the rocks under which they hide and plan to attack us. The basic theory is to cause the terrorists to worry about where they are going to sleep tonight rather than to be thinking about whom they are going to attack tomorrow.

It requires an aggressive international policy, but it is a policy directed at protecting us, Americans, across our Nation, giving us a better opportunity of avoid another 9/11, another attack on our country on our soil. As part of that effort, we have replaced a dictatorial, repressive, genocidal, maniacal regime in Iraq, a regime which clearly represented a threat to its neighbors and was a breeding ground for terrorists and a potential, if not real, supporter of those who would do us harm in the United States.

The strategy of the war was brilliantly executed by our military, our men and women. We have to admire their courage, their expertise, and the manner in which they comported themselves in Iraq. Their success militarily is in large part due to the fact that we are willing to spend our national treasury to support them, and we must continue to do that. That is what this supplemental is about.

So supporting our troops with the dollars they need and the equipment they require is a given. There is no one in this body who would question that.

The second part is the rebuilding of Iraq. Why is that important to us as a nation? Well, if we are going to undermine the fundamentalist Muslim terrorist threat, we must undermine their breeding ground, where they are able to recruit, and their philosophy for recruitment.

We have been extremely successful as a nation so far, I believe, in pursuing a tactical war against terrorists, and we can continue this tactical war and we will probably have to continue it for years to come. By that I mean finding the terrorists, following the dollars, tracking them down, using our expertise, our intelligence capability, and our military to neutralize their ability to attack us--whether it is in Afghanistan, Iraq, Buffalo, or Seattle--finding them before they can do us harm, eliminating their resources and sources of resources, and working an international coalition of law enforcement agencies and military forces that is capable of doing them physical harm before they can do us physical harm.

That is a tactical approach. It is one that is being pursued with great aggressiveness at all sorts of different levels--internationally, of course, and obviously in Iraq and Iran, but across the globe, such as in the Philippines and India and Pakistan, and domestically with the creation of the Homeland Security Department and the restructuring of our own domestic law enforcement community.

But that is tactical. That means you find the individual or the cell, you find the group of fundamentalist terrorists who are gathered together, you get the information on where they are, you disrupt them and, if you can bring them to justice, you do. That is tactical. That is not going to resolve the problem for us because, regrettably, no matter how you look at this, if you are honest about it, there is a cultural and a religious issue involved.

There are a billion people in this world who subscribe to the Muslim faith. It is a strong and good faith with an incredible history. But if only 1 percent of those billion people are attracted to the perversion of that faith and follow a Muslim fundamentalist view of the world--terrorist view of the world--that is 10 million people. That is potentially 10 million people who want to do us physical harm. Hopefully, it is not that high.

So if we are to pursue a lasting resolution of this issue, a tactical approach will keep us, hopefully, safer, but it will not resolve the underlying problem. We need much more of a strategic approach, something that looks at the forces which create the threat and undermines those forces. That is where the issue of addressing the reconstruction of Iraq comes in. There are a variety of ways we can address people who are members of the Muslim faith, especially in the

Middle East and show them that we, as a nation, are not a threat to them but are actually an avenue of opportunity. But today those options don't really exist in the Middle East.

If we can prove to people who subscribe to the Muslim faith and might be attracted to a fundamentalist terrorist approach that democracy works and is a great option for them, the market-oriented approach works and there is great opportunity for them, that education that encompasses the expansion of the mind relative to not only Western values, but Eastern values, and the issues of especially science and its potentials is of great value, then we will have created an opportunity for people to take a different look at what we stand for as a nation and say: Maybe rather than being a threat, you are an avenue of opportunity.

That is where Iraq comes in. If we are able to settle Iraq over the next 3 to 5 years in a way which allows it to grow as a democracy, in a way which allows it to grow as a market economy, in a way which allows its people, especially its children, to attend schools which teach a variety of values and especially the opportunities which come from quality education, if we are able to produce such an Iraq, it will be a shining light in the middle of the Middle East. It will be a place that people can look to and say, My goodness, democracy does work; market economies do mean more prosperity for my family and me; balanced education is a good thing. We will have set up a natural magnet to attract a positive view of these forces which have done so much for us as a nation and for the West, specifically democracy, market economies, and education.

Today that does not exist really in the Middle East, but this is our opportunity, an unintended consequence possibly of this war in Iraq, but clearly a potential consequence of significant and positive opportunity to create an Iraq, one of the larger nations in the Middle East and one of the wealthier nations in the Middle East, a nation with exceptional history and with a people who have historically been extraordinarily productive, to create a nation which realizes the dreams of freedom, opportunity, economic well-being, and education, which most people in the world subscribe to and desire, and that is why stabilizing Iraq is so important. If we accomplish that, we will fundamentally undermine the philosophy of the Muslim fundamentalists and their message to the Middle Eastern population, which is that America is a threat, an enemy, and that Americans must be destroyed and our culture must be attacked.

It will benefit us Americans in our country; it will benefit us in New Hampshire; it will benefit us in New York; it will benefit us in Pennsylvania; it will benefit us in California to have a nation in the Middle East which is a viable option to the threat and the message of fundamental Islam that goes to this whole strategic issue.

As we pursue our fight against terrorism, we have to have a two-track approach, in my mind. One is tactical, which I outlined. That is what we are doing in Afghanistan, obviously, and in Iraq with our military. It is what we are doing in working to break up the money in the European countries and to find the cells in the United States, and what we have to continue to pursue aggressively through the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, and the CIA.

At the same time, we need to have a strategic track. It has to go beyond just reconstructing an Iraq and making it a democratic nation. It has to go to messaging. It has to go to communication.

It has to go to education. We need to spend significant thought on planning and probably treasury on the issue of a strategic approach to set up different initiatives which will have the effect of undermining the capacity of the Muslim fundamentalists to recruit and to make their case against America by communicating more effectively throughout the Middle East and also across other Muslim nations in the southeast, such as the Philippines and Indonesia, and Pakistan, by creating initiatives which encourage market-oriented approaches, which encourage leaders who subscribe to democracy, which encourage leaders who subscribe to education.

It has to be more than just a haphazard exercise. It actually has to be a structured exercise. It is much more difficult, much less tangible than a tactical approach, but it needs the same type of attention and energy.

We are not doing that right now as a nation. We are certainly not doing that as a government, in my opinion, and we as a Congress should be thinking about how we can do this.

As we move down this road, I believe this is something to which we have to pay significant attention, but clearly, one step in this exercise of a strategic approach is to assist in the creation of a democratic, market-oriented nation in the middle of the Middle East, specifically Iraq, which subscribes to the teaching of its young a value system which is consistent with the beliefs of freedom and democracy and market forces. That is why it is so imperative that we make this investment in Iraq. It is not about protecting them. It is not about rebuilding Iraq, although that is certainly an outcome of it. It is about creating an opportunity to undermine the sources which breed the fundamentalist Islamic movement and, thus, lessening the threat against Americans and our culture.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.